(b) by when LPG would be available in all the villages alongwith the details of the scheme in this regard; and

(c) the reasons for not making LPG available in these villages till date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (c) At present, LPG connections are released on demand in all the existing markets throughout the country by the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs). As on 1.1.2003, the percentage of population covered by LPG in the country is 36.6%. OMCs have plan to set up more than 1,200 LPG distributorships in rural areas. As on 1.1.2003, more than 400 distributorships are operating exclusively in rural areas. After commissioning of all the planned distributorships, it is expected that rural population will be adequately covered by LPG.

Shortage of LPG in Faridabad and Ghaziabad

3358. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for shortage of LPG in Faridabad and Ghaziabad for the last six months;

(b) the names of dealers of IOC, BPCL and HPCL who have delayed delivery of LPG to their customers beyond ten days during the last three months; and

(c) the details of the reasons ascertained by oil companies for the said delays and the steps taken/to be taken to normalize the situation in these cities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (c) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) experienced low inventories of LPG at their various bottling plants in northern parts of country including Faridabad and Ghaziabad since November/December, 2002, mainly due to unplanned shutdown of Reliance refinery at Jamnagar, Gujarat, 'work to rule' agitation by Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) employees and transporters strike. Due to this, OMCs have reported the backlog of 3 to 9 days at certain LPG distributors during this period. Three distributors of IOCL in Faridabad also reported backlog of more than 10 days due to their own specific reasons. IOCL has suitably warned these distributors

to be careful in future. However, the reported backlog has been cleared since then and at present the supply position is normal.

Tender for transportation of LPG

†3359. DR. ABRAR AHMED : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the dates on which various oil companies in North India issued tenders for transportation of L.P.G. in bulk and packaged form during the last two years and when they were to be implemented; whether there has been any delay in the implementation of the same; if so, the reasons therefor and the persons who are responsible for the same;

(b) when was the period of the said tenders expired and the reasons for not making arrangements for giving new contracts before the expiry of the said period; the names of the person who was responsible for this; and

(c) the scheme for transportation of L.P.G. in bulk and packed form in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), namely Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) floated individual tender for bulk LPG transportation in North India during June, 2002. The contract with transporters through this tender was to be implemented from November, 2002. However, OMCs could not finalise the tender on time due to the time taken in completing all the formalities pertaining to scrutiny of Credential Bids, the Price Bids and the cartelisation of bidders resulting into long negotiation process.

The tenders for packed LPG transportation were floated by OMCs on individual location basis and at most of the locations, tenders were finalised more or less on time except in such cases where negotiation process took more than usual time.

(c) OMCs have the plan to invite public tenders for the transportation of bulk and packed LPG in future also, as being done currently.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.